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AUTHOR Barr, Robert D., Ed.; Schalock, H. Del, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

A small group of influential educators participated in a Wingspread Conference to discuss the topic of teacher warranty programs. While each of the warranty programs described at Wingspread was distinctive, there were a number of features that all seemed to have in common: (1) teacher warranty programs are a form of quality assurance for employers; (2) teacher warranty programs are a form of institutional commitment to graduates; and (3) teacher warranty programs are a means of providing assistance to beginning teachers. Each program emphasizes the careful evaluation of teachers during their first year in the classroom and involves a commitment to provide a wide variety of support services. This report on the conference presents summaries of the topics discussed: (1) public reaction to warranty programs; (2) warranty assets; (3) lingering anxieties; (4) evolution of the warranty; (5) concept of warranty "compacts"; (6) the differences warranties can make in student learning; (7) a marketing strategy for warranties; and (8) the impact the warranty has had on teacher education. (JD)

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Wingspread Conference on Quality Assurance in Teacher Education

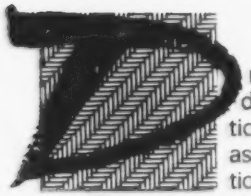
Sponsored by the
OSU-WOSC School of Education
and the
American Association of
Colleges of Teacher Education

Edited by Robert D. Barr
and H. Del Schalock

The OSU-WOSC School of Education was merged in 1982 and today it is the largest school of education in the Northwest, serving both Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in education.

Preceding photo: The Johnson Foundation and the Wingspread Conference Center

The Johnson Foundation, established in 1959 by the late Herbert Fisk Johnson, founder of the Johnson Wax Company, is dedicated to the goal of improving society through four broad categories of action: international understanding, educational excellence, improvement of the human environment, and intellectual and cultural growth. The Johnson Foundation pursues these goals as convener of an ongoing series of conference radio programs and news dissemination associated with the internationally recognized Wingspread Conference Center. Wingspread, located on 40 acres in Racine, Wisconsin, was formerly the Johnson family home and was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. This magnificent setting is used to provide an environment to explore issues at the cutting edge of change in the nation and world.



uring the last three years, more than a dozen schools and departments of education have created warranty programs that assure the quality of their teacher education graduates. These programs have been initiated at several major universities (Oregon State University-Western Oregon State College, Purdue University, University of Virginia, University of Nebraska, University of Northern Colorado, North Texas State University, and Montana State University), a few smaller universities (Emporia State University, Eastern Washington University), several small colleges (Doane College, Adelphi, Concordia of Seward, etc.) and two predominantly black institutions (Grambling State University and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff). Federal legislation has also been passed requiring the U.S. Department of Education to develop criteria for a model warranty program and at least two states (Alabama and Oregon) are considering statewide warranty programs.

Because of the interest these warranty programs have attracted in the national and international media, the Johnson Foundation invited a small group of influential educators to Racine, Wisconsin to participate in a conference on the topic. The conference included teachers, school administrators, college/university professors, deans of education, representatives from AACTE and NCATE, editors of professional journals, and representatives from the Holmes Group. While many of the participants arrived at the conference as "interested skeptics," the conference ended with a surprising degree of consensus regarding the value of further development of the quality assurance concept.

The conference helped to document the variations of the idea of guaranteeing teachers: from little more than public relations hype to increasingly sophisticated programs designed to assure the quality of graduates of teacher education programs. The conference also described the early beginnings of serious research and development efforts in Oregon to develop the ablity to effectively predict the performance of teachers in fostering student learning.

"Maybe the warranty is like a band wagon or Halley's Comet, but as a building principal, I'm just glad it came around during my lifetime."

HARLEY RECTOR, Principal
Norfolk Junior High School,
Nebraska

articipants at the Wingspread Conference included teacher educators from a number of schools and departments of education who had developed warranty programs. Doane College, with a small teacher education program (35 new teachers last year) in Nebraska that is credited with starting the first warranty program, was present along with the Oregon State University-Western Oregon State College merged School of Education which became the first large state institution (over 680 new teachers last year) to attempt a warranty. Other participants who had started warranties came from Eastern Washington University, Montana State University, and North Texas State University.

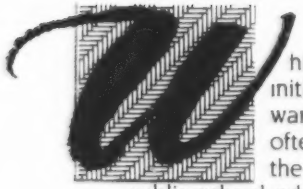
While each of the warranty programs described at Wingspread was distinctive, there were a number of features that all seemed to have in common:

- Teacher warranty programs are a form of quality assurance for employers.
- Teacher warranty programs are a form of institutional commitment to graduates.
- Teacher warranty programs are a means of providing assistance to beginning teachers.

Each warranty program emphasized the careful evaluation of teachers during their first year in the classroom and involved a commitment to provide a wide variety of support services:

- "hot-line" telephone consultation
- on-site observation, consultation and support
- providing funds for substitute teachers to allow beginning teachers to participate in professional development activities
- providing special workshops
- offering beginning teachers the opportunity to return to campus for additional course work that would be tuition free.

In most programs, these services focused on beginning teachers who were evaluated as having difficulties. Only Doane College provided the services to all graduates. All of the warranty programs represented at Wingspread reported strong positive reactions by both the professional community and the press.

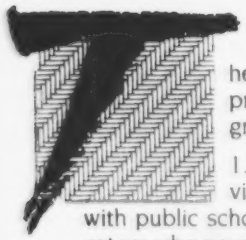


hile many in the professional community initially reacted to the concept of teacher warranties or guarantees in a negative and often embarrassed manner, such was not the case in the general public and with public school educators. While higher education types might criticize the warranty as educational gimmickry, public school teachers and administrators enthusiastically supported the programs, and newspapers, television, and legislatures seemed to love the concept. When Doane College first announced a teacher guarantee, it was picked up by national radio and television. When the School of Education at Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College first announced the warranty, it was reported in the New York Times, U.S. Today, and was supported by a number of strong, positive editorials in leading newspapers. It also led to federal legislation and two national awards. And, wherever warranties have been established, the reaction has been the same.

This positive public reaction to warranty programs seemed to have been based on the generally accepted view that teacher education students were the weakest in higher education and that teacher education programs were largely worthless. Because of this viewpoint, warranty programs had a dramatic impact. Editorial writers throughout the country reported their amazement that schools of education would be so confident of their graduates.

"This concept really catches my fancy. It is a gimmick—but it is so American. It is perfectly attuned to the times in which we are living; it is in touch with today. Look at slogans of today's businesses. 'We service. 'We respond.' This is the key to the marketplace. The quality assurance idea is a direct steal from the real world."

BOB COLE, Editor, Phi Delta KAPPAN



he Wingspread participants outlined the primary advantages of their warranty programs:

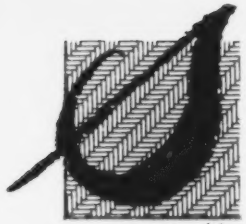
1. All agreed that warranty programs provided an exciting new avenue for working with public schools—and even those public school educators who never had occasion to use the warranty felt it was good to know it was there. The warranty clearly helped to strengthen relationships with public schools.

2. Through experience with warranty programs, it was discovered that approximately half of the beginning teachers who were experiencing difficulty were placed in situations that made effective teaching nearly impossible. Many beginning teachers were "missassigned" outside their certification areas, or were assigned multiple, often five or more, teaching preparations. Often the beginning teachers were assigned the worst students in the worst facility. The warranty provided a legitimate process for college and university professors to act as ombudsmen or advocates for the beginning teachers. Many of the Wingspread participants felt this was THE primary advantage of the warranty—the opportunity to help protect beginning teachers.

3. The conference participants also emphasized the impact that warranty programs had on the college and university faculty. While the positive media and press reaction helped to boost morale, it also caused some faculty members to worry about guaranteeing all of their students. The warranty confronted faculty members with their responsibilities for preparing teachers—not just teaching courses. It also led to increased program admission standards, developing more rigorous programs, and screening students more closely as they moved through the process.

4. Conference participants also described the strong positive impact of working with beginning teachers after they had entered their own classrooms.

Lingering Anxieties



till, those who had established warranty programs reported strong anxieties about the idea. They reported that in spite of the positive "furor" in the press over their programs, most programs provided opportunities to work with very small numbers of students. Of the 680 graduates from OSU-WOSC, only six new teachers were involved in warranty situations; and two of the six were invited to return for tuition free summer graduate work. Some conference participants felt the warranty was "no big deal"; that their warranty represented little more than how they had always responded to situations where their graduates experienced difficulty in school settings. Some worried that other schools and departments of education had simply gotten on the "band wagon" to take advantage of the good press without developing substantive programs.

"I was surprised that this conference confronted the tough questions regarding warranty programs. I came to the conference rather skeptical and did not expect the concept to be explored in such a forthright manner. I arrived thinking this was just another educational gimmick, but found the concept very worthwhile.

ELIZABETH ASHBURN, Director of Research and Information Services
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

Evolution of the Warranty:
From Quality Assurance to Teacher Productivity

onference participants reported that most of the schools and departments of education which had established warranty programs used the warranty as only one component of more ambitious programs. These typically have come to be referred to as quality assurance programs and involve far more substantial efforts.

1. "Truth in Advertising"

One effort has been to develop more careful and accurate assessment of students as they proceed through a teacher education program, and to develop solid evidence on students' performance levels. For example, at OSU-WOSC, students are tested for basic skills, tested for content knowledge using the National Teachers Examination, tested for computer literacy, etc. All students complete their teacher education programs with a "profile" of their skill levels; thus providing employers with a more accurate assessment of students' abilities. Representatives from Doane College and the Eastern Washington University indicated that their efforts at quality assurance centered on providing descriptions of specific program outcomes in the form of teacher competencies.

Dick Dudley of Doane College listed 15 specific competencies in the areas of planning, interaction, classroom management, content knowledge, evaluation, and interpretation. William Shreeve of Eastern Washington University explained that they provided their graduates with assurances in management, methodology, and evaluation skills. Montana State and an increasing number of other schools of education include academic learning in the arts and sciences in the warranty coverage. Del Schalock of Teaching Research Division of the Oregon State System of Higher Education and the OSU-WOSC School of Education emphasized that evidence should be collected on teacher education students regarding the necessary traits for effective teaching, mastery of basic skills, knowledge, teaching skills, and their ability to carry out the responsibilities of teaching. He also raised the question with Wingspread Conference participants as to whether or not quality assurance programs should include assurances regarding the ability of teachers to foster short-term and long-term learning gains in their students.

Bob Barr of OSU-WOSC reported that this aspect of quality assurance had come to be perceived as a "truth in advertising" by public school employers. It helped employers have a better understanding of what beginning teachers could be expected to do and promised assistance to school districts should the new teachers experience difficulties in these areas.

2. Beginning Teacher Support Programs

One aspect of quality assurance programs was to develop a variety of follow-up programs designed to assist and support beginning teachers during their early career in the classroom. Some of the warranty programs

involve on-site observation and support for all graduates, most involve on-site assistance and support to beginning teachers who are experiencing difficulties. Two teachers who graduated from Doane College attended the Wingspread Conference and described the importance and effectiveness of Dr. Richard Dudley's regular visits to their classrooms during their first year of teaching.

As Karla George, a Doane College graduate in her first year of teaching, said, "I knew I had been prepared very well and I was so anxious to get my own classroom and go to work. But my former professor helped me, supported me, and encouraged me during that first year. As a graduate of Doane, I felt I was a real 'star' —but even 'stars' need help during that first year. My first year was a real team effort. It was so good to know, 'I'm not in this alone.'"

John Kohl of Montana State University emphasized that "Calls for assistance must not be viewed as a negative experience. They should be viewed as requests to assist in the on-going, continuous task of teacher education—a task that never ends—and we should be a part of that task."

Some warranty programs include more comprehensive "induction programs" which include a series of "drive-in" beginning teacher clinics and workshops for public school principals.

3. Teacher Evaluation and the "Million-Dollar Decision"

Del Schalock emphasized the importance of careful, reliable teacher evaluation systems that had integrity. He described the decisions to tenure a teacher as a "million-dollar decision"—the amount of money a teacher would earn over the remainder of his or her career. Schalock feared that tenure decisions were not being based on careful assessment of teacher effectiveness. Even schools using evaluation programs tend to avoid the most important variable of all: "Can this teacher foster learning in students?"

Educators working with warranty programs discovered a startling inconsistency regarding school district evaluation of teachers. Some public schools did little or no evaluation, or extremely superficial evaluation. Others had highly sophisticated evaluation programs, and many differed significantly in the type of evaluation systems used in teacher education programs. Often, this meant that schools and departments of education might evaluate teachers one way and employing school districts might be using a different, perhaps contradictory, approach. It was also reported that principals seem to be uneasy with their responsibility for evaluating teachers, often putting off doing classroom evaluation until the required deadlines were approaching.

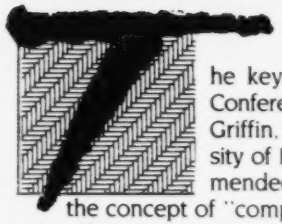
"When we announced the warranty, a lot of deans of education thought we had lost our minds..... But the schools loved the idea, and our students loved the idea...and for the first time in a decade, we had legislators and editorial writers supporting us."

ROBERT D. BARR, Dean
School of Education
OSU-WOSC School of Education

This recognition led Del Schalock and his colleagues in Oregon to begin developing a "generic" teacher evaluation system that could be used by colleges and universities as well as public schools in order to gain statewide agreement between teacher educators, school administrators, and teachers on the criteria and standards for evaluation. Some conference participants wondered why there had been more interest in developing national standards rather than developing national agreement upon teacher evaluation criteria and processes.

4. Predicting Teacher Productivity

Directly related to teacher evaluation was the report by Del Schalock and Bob Barr of their interest and work regarding predicting teacher performance. Schalock described ten years of research and development with eleven school districts in Oregon where a goal-based curriculum had been developed and implemented, assessment exams developed, and test item banks developed. He also described research on teachers' ability to achieve the established learning goals with different types of students and in different subject areas. He reported that the research provided a strong foundation for both predicting teacher performance and productivity and to diagnose and provide remediation for teachers. He and Barr also reported the development of the new teacher education program at OSU-WOSC characterized by an emphasis on educational productivity.



he keynote speaker for the Wingspread Conference on Quality Assurance was Gary Griffin, Dean, School of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Griffin recommended that teacher educators consider the concept of "compacts between schools and teacher education programs rather than warranties," and, while he found the concept of a warranty novel and intriguing, he identified a number of issues that made warranty programs extremely difficult. He worried about the mobility of teachers from job to job; the importance of the "context of teaching"; that there is simply no "shared understanding" re "best teaching practices"; and the lack of "quality control mechanisms."

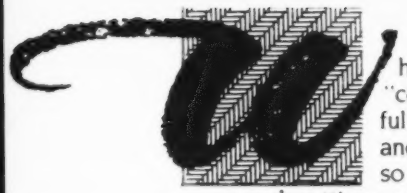
Rather than warranties being largely the responsibility of higher education, Griffin strongly endorsed expanding the idea to include "compacts" with public schools. He emphasized that the following represented essential "agreements" as prerequistes to any significant assurances. Schools of education and public schools should:

- Develop an agreed-upon concept of "best practices" to guide teacher education programs and later teacher evaluation.
- Develop agreements regarding the conditions/characteristics of the most appropriate educational settings for beginning teachers.
- Develop agreements regarding different "expectations" for a beginning teacher as contrasted with a veteran teacher.
- Work together to develop model school environments.
- Work together to develop valid, reliable methods for validating any type of warranty.
- Work together to agree on a knowledge base for teacher education programs (but acknowledge that some public schools may be far more sophisticated in their understanding of teacher/school effectiveness research).
- Work together to generate new knowledge.

Griffin concluded by stating that in spite of all the complexities of teacher education, he felt warranties held strong possibilities to encourage schools and higher education to develop a "common cause" to improve education, help to describe the "chances" for beginning teachers, emphasize that teacher preparation is an ongoing program, and could well lead to positively influencing teacher certification at the state level. Most important, he felt warranty programs could lead to negotiated "compacts" of agreement with public schools and help to make teacher education a truly "cooperative enterprise."

"When it comes to granting tenure to a teacher, when you think about the salary that person will be paid during his/her career, you are talking about a 'million-dollar decision.' And, when you recognize the impact that the teacher will have on the lives of kids, we simply must consider the effectiveness of that teacher in fostering student learning."

H. DEL SCHALOCK, Assistant to the Dean for Research and Development
OSU-WOSC School of Education



hile conference participants felt that the "context" of teaching was such a powerful influence on student learner outcomes, and that the context of teaching differed so dramatically from urban to suburban to rural settings and involved such diverse groups of students, they questioned whether predicting teacher success could ever be achieved. Martin Haberman was concerned regarding this issue and was especially critical that warranty programs had been developed for rural and suburban areas but not urban schools. He leveled strong criticism at teacher education for abandoning urban schools and expressed suspicion that few teacher education programs would or could train effective teachers for the most critical urban school situations. As Haberman said, "What difference does it make to provide warranties when 3,000 additional children fall into the poverty range each day, when three and a half million teenagers give birth to illegitimate children each year, and 60 percent of all children grow up in single-parent families." He asked if teacher education in general or warranties in particular had "any redeeming social implication."

"We have to find the 'right end of the hammer' if we are going to build better teacher education programs. Most of the reorganization of teacher education is irrelevant to the performance of kids in schools. The schools must be changed to improve performance. And if teacher education is to have any legitimacy, the educators must find a role in that effort. The warranty may be the first step in the right direction."

—Phillip Schlechty

"I still have some reservations that gnaw at me. Should we invest this much energy in the bottom 20 percent of our beginning teachers? If public education is truly at stake in America, our emphasis should be on school improvements."

—Elizabeth Ashburn

"Actually, I don't think higher education in America teaches much that is of any value to an urban teacher. I challenge any of you to prepare a teacher you would warranty to an inner city urban school in any major urban area. Imagine a school with 5,000 students, where there are 800 absences each day; where 40 percent of the faculty doesn't show up on any given day, and there are 30 to 50 substitute teachers working in the building. Oh yes, and don't forget that 75 percent of all of the students are failing. If you can deal with that kind of situation, then I'll be glad to talk with you about warranties."

—Martin Haberman

"We don't have a warranty program at the University of Florida, but we do have a strong teacher education program. Certainly, I believe it is one of the finest extended teacher education programs in the nation. But our best efforts seem so insignificant compared with the problems of the state. Florida has 90,000 teachers—many very mature, many trained a long time ago. One in ten of our classes have a missassigned teacher, and a high school graduate can now work as a substitute teacher. So the best efforts of a school of education, even a good one, are almost invisible. Yet, we are held responsible for the crisis in public education."

—David Smith

leading researcher, urban educator, and teacher educator, Phillip Schlecty provided the conference with a number of insightful new ideas about teacher education. He described the Jefferson County Public Schools Center in Louisville, Kentucky, where he directs the district's teacher education program. His practical, down-to-earth experience with transferring research knowledge into inventive new programs provided extremely beneficial insight.

The following are excerpts from Schlecty's presentation:

"I like the warranty concept. It is such a 'marketable' concept. And I believe that education desperately needs strong metaphors to help translate complicated research into 'marketable ideas.' Think of the 'shopping mall high school' metaphor and how powerful that is. Perhaps an even better metaphor is the high schools as 'airports' rather than shopping malls. I have been working to use the metaphor of airports to emphasize the need to individualize each student's learning destination. But warranty is a powerful, marketable metaphor.

"For years, I have used the 'medical model' as a metaphor for teaching, but, increasingly, I believe that the marketing metaphor is more useful. Teacher education should use teachers as marketing experts. We should observe them and solicit their ideas the same way IBM or AT&T does market research. In the past, higher education has been very good at sales, i.e., selling the 'products' they have on their shelves: courses and graduate credit. But, if we use market research techniques and use research and development to invent responses to the marketplace, we would leap far beyond courses and credits. We have a decade to try to 'beat the market,' but we must invent new products. Our products must meet teachers' REAL NEEDS. Most teachers know how to teach better than they are able to do. We need to design products/services that respond to teachers' problems.

"The warranty could cause problems for it suggests that we might be preparing teachers too well. I think we need optimal products, not maximum products. We need to prepare teachers who want and need to keep on learning, even if it is to teach better one more day next year. If all teachers worked to improve one more day, think of how that would add up.

"In a way, the warranty concept is like the slogan, 'We will sell no wine before its time.' It's really a mastery learning concept. What you are saying is we will not send new teachers out until they are ready. You are selling 'integrity,' and that is a very scarce commodity these days.

"Why not provide a "warranty" to the individual teacher, rather than to the employing school? Then if teachers need help, they could have a direct line to assistance. Louisville has developed a 'teacher exchange' program where teachers can call a 'hot-line' to gain direct, personal assistance to problems they are confronting. This program is working and providing the kind of help teachers have never had access to before."

"The greatest value of the warranty concept is in the area of 'marketing.' Throughout this conference, I have heard people talk about "truth in advertising," "value added," and warranties—these are all marketing concepts. In this day and time, it is very, very important to "market" teacher education. I know of no other development that has done this so well, with such far-reaching impact."

ELIZABETH ASHBURN, Director of Research and Information Services

American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

What Impact Has The Warranty Had On Teacher Education?

n the new NCATE standards, there was a strong lobby to include words like guarantee and warranty. And, while we didn't include such terms, the new standards have the warranty concept imbedded in them. If you look in the section dealing with Relationships with the World of Practica, you will find the warranty concept both in standards dealing with Relationship to Graduates and the Relationship to Schools.

"Now that the language is in the standards, we are all now confronted with the need to develop qualitative measures to assess compliance."

—Richard Kunkel

"What disturbs me most is that so few people know about warranties and quality assurance. It is essential that we move this concept into the educational marketplace to explain what these programs are about and why they have been started and to subject them to scrutiny by the profession.

"I still feel there is a sense of confusion regarding the concept—perhaps because each program is very different. But in spite of my skepticism and the confusion, I find the idea very exciting. It emphasizes accountability and productivity, and focuses on specific performance outcomes. It also is moving to emphasize partnerships with public schools. I see the value in warranty programs helping to protect beginning teachers, and it is the single best response to media criticism that has occurred. The idea seems to hold a lot of promise for response to public demands about teacher education."

—Elizabeth Ashburn

"The schools seem to believe that we are producing teachers who should not be in teaching; we believe that school environments seriously hamper teacher success. We also can't forget that we are in the business of 'mass producing' teachers. Given all of this, it seems that the warranty is a useful idea. It indicates our willingness to take ownership of our graduates and announce that our graduates are far better than they are perceived to be. The warranty also enables us to get into schools and classrooms and work together to improve education."

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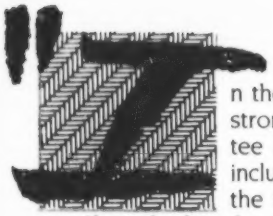

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—Bill Cowart

"Still, I have lingering doubts. I can understand how we can guarantee 'tangible goods,' or a product—I am less convinced about teacher education. We produce 'services' not products and there is a vast degree of difference between quality control for products and services. How could you guarantee the services of a lawyer or an advertising agency? The warranty has a built in 'implied oversimplification' of what we do; what we could do.

"In spite of my continuing uneasiness about the warranty idea, I was extremely influenced by the Nebraska teachers who described the added boost the Doane program gave them in entering a very tough profession. I also like the idea that the warranty sends a strong message to the country that we do take the responsibility for our actions.

"If warranties are to be used, they must not be superficial PR programs. They must have substance. We must be careful to see the donut and not the hole!

"We must remember that other professions—engineers, nurses, lawyers—finish their programs 'ready to learn.' We cannot prepare teachers in a college/university setting—we can provide new teachers who are ready to learn—and who can be assisted in their development into teachers. Warranties may suggest a very different image."

—David Smith

"What is really essential about any warranty is that the program looks as if it backs it up. If we have a solid, extended program like the Holmes Group and others are recommending, then a warranty is no big deal. I do believe that an EFFECTIVE mentor program or some extended clinical program that goes well beyond typical current practice would make a warranty program less important. Warranty programs are one response to the obvious need to support new teachers. I suppose I would work for both a more substantial initial program of preparation AND effective support for teachers once on the job. A warranty gets us part way, but seems second best to me to fundamental changes in teacher preparation programs."

—John Palmer

"This may seem ridiculous, but the most important aspect of the warranty is not the warranty, but the quality of the education program that supports it."

—John Kohl

"There are so many potential weak links in teacher education, so much that can go wrong, making teacher education a very easy target.

"My only concern regarding the warranty, given the magnitude of our problems, is that it is only a 'finger in the dike.'"

—Bob Cole

"To be against such a highly visible concept would be 'un-American.' The interest the warranty has generated is very positive. There is a crisis of confidence in education and the warranty does have strong media appeal."

DAVID SMITH, Dean
School of Education, University of Florida

Wingspread Conference Participants, Presenters and Panel Members

Presenters and Panel Members

Robert D. Barr, Dean
OSU-WOSC School of Education
Oregon State University campus
Corvallis, OR 97331
(503) 754-3739

H. Del Schalock, Assistant to the Dean for Research and Development
OSU-WOSC School of Education
Western Oregon State College campus
Monmouth, OR 97361
(503) 838-1200 Ext. 391

Gary A. Griffin, Dean
School of Education
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 996-3000

Richard E. Dudley, Chair
Education Division
Doane College
Crete, NB 68333
(402) 826-2161

Dan Woods, Teacher of Science
Norfolk Junior High School
5th and Pasewalk
Norfolk, NB 68701
(402) 371-2241

John R. Palmer, Dean
School of Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI 53706
(608) 262-6137

Carla George, Teacher
Valentine Elementary School
239 N. Wood
Valentine, NB 69201
(402) 376-2337

Phillip Schlechty,
Executive Director
Jefferson County Public Schools—Gheens Professional Development Academy
4409 Preston Highway
Louisville, KY 40213
(502) 456-3494

Martin Haberman, Professor
College of Education
University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201
(414) 936-4181

Richard Kunkel, Executive Director
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
1919 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 202
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 466-7496

Elizabeth Ashburn, Director of Research and Informational Services
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
One Dupont Circle, Suite 610
Washington, D.C. 20036
(292) 293-2450

Robert Cole, Editor
Phi Delta KAPPAN
Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47402
(812) 339-1156

Harley Rector, Principal
Norfolk Junior High School
5th and Pasewalk
Norfolk, NB 68701
(402) 371-2241

David C. Smith, Dean
College of Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611
(904) 392-0728

Participants

Lowell Dodd, Professor
Education Division
Doane College
Crete, NB 68333
(402) 826-2161

Julie Kozisek, Assistant Professor
Education Division
Doane College
Crete, NB 68333
(402) 826-2161

Stan Wigle, Assistant Professor
Education Division
Doane College
Crete, NB 68333
(402) 826-2161

William C. Shreeve, Chair
Department of Education
Eastern Washington University
Cheney, WA 99004
(509) 359-6187

Joann Dickerson
Department of Education
Eastern Washington University
Cheney, WA 99004
(509) 359-6187

John W. Kohl, Dean
College of Education
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 994-4731

Alvah M. Kilgore, Associate Professor
Curriculum and Instruction
School of Education
University of Nebraska—Lincoln
Lincoln, NB 68588
(402) 472-3569

Laura Frankiewicz
Office of Clinical Education and Student Services, Gabel #146
Northern Illinois University
Dekalb, IL 60115-2854
(815) 753-8356

Richard Simms, Associate Dean
College of Education
North Texas State University
Denton, TX 76203
(817) 565-2233

Gerald Ponder, Professor
College of Education
North Texas State University
Denton, TX 76203
(817) 565-2233

Bill Cowart, Provost
Western Oregon State College
Monmouth, OR 97361
(503) 838-1200, Extension 271

The Johnson Foundation Representatives

Henry M. Halstead, Vice President
The Johnson Foundation
Racine, WI 53401-0547
(414) 639-3211

Kay Mauer, Conference Coordinator
The Johnson Foundation
Racine, WI 53401-0547
(414) 639-3211

School of Education
OSUWOSC

AACTE